The Enduring Advantage of Settlement Houses

A report by
United Neighborhood Houses
of New York

United Neighborhood Houses

United Neighborhood Houses (UNH) is the membership organization of New York City settlement houses and community centers. Rooted in the history and values of the settlement house movement, UNH promotes and strengthens the neighborhood-based, multi-service approach to improving the lives of New Yorkers in need and the communities in which they live. UNH's membership comprises one of the largest human service systems in New York City, with 37 agencies working at more than 400 sites to provide high quality services and activities to a half million New Yorkers each year. UNH supports its members through policy development, advocacy and capacity-buildling activities.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A POWERFUL MODEL

This publication features the work of community-based organizations that are members of United Neighborhood Houses of New York (UNH). Founded in 1919 and rooted in the history and values of the settlement house movement, UNH promotes and strengthens the neighborhood-based, multi-service approach to improving the lives of New Yorkers in need and the communities in which they live. Today, UNH's 37 members comprise one of the largest human service systems in New York City, providing high quality services at more than 400 sites to more than a half million New Yorkers each year.

Settlement houses developed at the end of the nineteenth century as Jane Addams, Lillian Wald and other leading American reformers founded and built institutions such as Hull House and Henry Street Settlement in poor big-city neighborhoods. Volunteers and professionals "settled" in these neighborhoods and worked alongside local people, usually immigrant or poor, to alleviate hardship and celebrate cultural traditions.

In this way, for over a century, settlement houses have been strengthening neighborhoods, families and civic life. Settlement houses, and the closely-related community centers that are also part of UNH, are powerful places, where neighborhood residents, staff and volunteers collaborate on shared purposes.[1]

Together, these individuals create communities that can nourish the spirit, honor diversity, foster civic engagement, seek social justice, improve the built environment, offer opportunities for talent development, tackle local problems and provide individuals and families with information and support. The enduring significance of settlement houses rests on their capacity for adaptation and innovation.

This report, *The Enduring Advantage of Settlement Houses,* examines the distinctive practice the settlement house model has generated and illustrates how this practice creates a settlement house advantage that is worthy of attention. The first part of this report describes the principles that frame settlement house practice and the second part illustrates the value of this practice in settlement house programs for disconnected youth and immigrant families.

Developing this publication has been a collaborative endeavor. While the experiences of many UNH members informed this work, we greatly appreciate the particular contributions of the UNH members listed in the acknowledgements section of the report.

Elizabeth A. McGee and Shelby H. Miller, principals of the consulting firm, High Impact Partnering, conducted the research to produce this report. We especially thank Elizabeth (Betsey) McGee, the primary author of this document, for her dedication to understanding and articulating the value of settlement house work. We also thank Anne Shkuda, UNH Deputy Executive Director, who believed in this project and shepherded it along with skill and patience.

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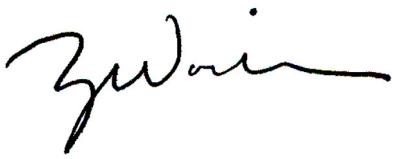

Nancy Wackstein
Executive Director, United Neighborhood Houses of New York

DISTINCTIVE PRACTICE AND THE SETTLEMENT HOUSE ADVANTAGE

During the past century, settlement houses developed a distinctive practice that combines a focus on professional excellence and a philosophical perspective. While the methods and standards of particular areas of professional specialization are basic to the provision of services by many organizations that strive for excellence, specific settlement house principles shape how professional practice takes place among UNH members.

The professional aspect of settlement house practice is easy to understand: Staff members within specific departments or programs follow the practice of their own disciplines. For example, a preschool program hires staff trained in early childhood education. As described below, staff members working with "disconnected" young people use "youth development" approaches formulated by youth-services experts over the past two decades.

The principles underlying settlement house practice are less familiar, yet they ground all aspects of staff members' work. These principles differentiated the first settlement houses from existing institutions focused on alleviating poverty though charity, and set settlement houses apart from other social service agencies that subsequently emerged. Today, these enduring principles, rooted in a vision of human potential, community strength and social fairness, continue to guide how settlement houses conceptualize and implement their mission and embody the settlement house philosophy.

Irma Rodriguez, Executive Director of UNH member Queens Community House, identifies the core principles as *embeddedness, reciprocity, community-building, multiple points of entry and wraparound, integrated service*s. Ms. Rodriguez and other staff members in UNH member organizations contributed additional information about how each of these principles affects their work, providing the following descriptions and examples.

- ***Embeddedness.*** Settlement houses are place-based. They are "of, by, and for" the neighborhoods in which they are located. Being part of the geographical area they serve is at the heart of the settlement house model.

Rob Abbot summarizes this orientation within UNH member Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation organization in Brooklyn, where he works:

> Our approach is holistic, comprehensive, and grassroots. Founded and led by local people, Cypress Hills is neighborhood-focused. At first, we required board members to live or work within Cypress Hills. We encourage staff to live here too, we try to hire or promote from within and we employ young people who were in our programs. Our services are about people, bricks and mortar, economic development and community organizing, especially around housing needs and education justice. We work in many settings within our community, so our director, Michelle Neugebauer, says, 'We're a settlement house without a house.'

- ***Reciprocity.*** Settlement houses create an organizational culture in which everyone (participants, staff and volunteers) can contribute because they all have something to offer. This culture affirms the worth of each person in the community and supports collaboration on a common enterprise—allowing local residents to learn from each other and to work together.

Lowell Herschberger elaborates on how this principle is pursued within the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation:

> We focus on people's strengths, rather than on their risks or deficits. We give them ample opportunities to become leaders, co-creators of our program and active participants on every level. We help them create strong, positive relationships with us and with peers. We support their building skills, developing mastery and becoming engaged in their communities.

- ***Community-building.*** Settlement houses focus on strengthening a sense of community belonging. Making connections across generational and cultural divides is critical to this goal, as is attending to the human and physical dimensions of strengthening communities.

- ***Multiple points of entry.*** Settlement houses provide many avenues to activities, programs and services, offering neighborhood families and individuals a variety of ways to begin relationships with the organization and staff. One service

operates as a gateway to another. Often staff and families meet initially through services for children. Staff say, "They're our kids, and we're their home." This positive and welcoming beginning makes it more likely that each encounter will lead to longstanding relationships and have positive multiplier effects.

- ***Wraparound, integrated services.*** Settlement houses offer a full and complementary array of services. And since they want to make sure that the various programs and services in which individuals participate fit together into a coherent whole, the goal is for each participant to have a staff member who is tracking his or her involvement.

Julia Jean-Francois, of UNH member Center for Family Life in Sunset Park, emphasizes the importance of this principle for her organization. "Our most important process outcome is the synergy of our services for those using them."

The Settlement House Advantage

For UNH members, these principles are not a menu. All are critical to the success of the settlement house model. They guide the translation of philosophy into practice, which for each organization also reflects its purpose, culture, participant characteristics and capabilities. This distinctive practice in turn confers *a settlement house advantage* to their work. Through this work, community members gain much more than service and support.

Lowell Hershberger describes this advantage:

> The key to good settlement house practice is that we spend more time on the *why*. We talk about the broader social context for our efforts and for participants' efforts. We work together on larger struggles as well as on individual struggles. Our families and individuals get caught up in the larger vision. They see that they are part of something more important than 'just me.' They see how they too can become agents of change. We're always helping participants understand the unique contribution they can make. A young woman in our adult education program said, 'At other places, the program is just about getting a diploma. Here it's about more than this. We're about expanding opportunity for others and not just ourselves.'

Because of the positive and empowering nature of settlement house practice, UNH members believe that even people who are wary of institutional engagement will find the settlement house experience different from what they may have encountered elsewhere. For participants, this experience can yield substantial benefits, which are the prerequisites for people making positive changes in their lives. These benefits include:

- ***A sense of belonging.*** Settlement houses are closely tied to their communities. Consequently, participants feel that they fit in. They are community members who may live, work or go to school in the neighborhood—not just "clients."

- ***A sense of efficacy.*** Settlement house programs emphasize "voice and leadership," consistent with their efforts to increase people's confidence that they can succeed.

- ***A sense of possibility.*** In settlement houses, staff, volunteers and participants offer many kinds of supports. Youth programs, for example, reward positive behavior and foster close and caring relationships with staff who serve as compelling role models because they are dedicated to the local community, and are often from that community.

When participants in settlement house programs acquire a positive and empowering worldview founded in belonging, efficacy and possibility, their experience reflects the vision and values of the settlement house pioneers reinterpreted for the twenty-first century. In this hopeful way of thinking about themselves and the world around them lies the enduring advantage of settlement houses.

SETTLEMENT HOUSE PRACTICE FOR DISCONNECTED YOUTH

An attorney laments the fate of a teenager who is going to prison: "If he understood another road, could envision a different path, he would have been a highly successful entrepreneur!"[2]

Each year, a significant number of American teenagers and young adults step off the conventional path of preparation for adult responsibilities. Often they have grown up outside of the American mainstream, and then become further marginalized because they are not in school or working. Consequently, many of these young people "have neither the skills, supports, experience, education nor confidence to successfully transition to adulthood."[3] It is likely that their lives will be hard and their problems costly for taxpayers.

In New York City, one in six youth in the cohort of 16- to 24-year-olds is disconnected from the institutions and networks he or she needs to navigate the transitions of adolescence.[4] These youth are largely from poor communities, where they make up a significant proportion of young people, and from low-income families. Disconnected youth include students who have been discharged from or dropped out of school, young adults with poor basic skills, youngsters aging out of foster care, young people entangled with the criminal justice system, gang members, teen mothers, the offspring of incarcerated parents, welfare recipients, young people with physical or mental health needs, drug or alcohol addicts and runaway or homeless youth.

The life circumstances of many New York City children make it more likely that they will disconnect from the institutions that are meant to guide them. The education resources available to them are often inadequate because of failing schools as well as limited out-of-school learning opportunities and work preparation options. Constrained by poverty and family instability, the adults in these youngsters' lives are often unable to compensate for deficits in the systems that should prepare young people for the future, connect them with enriching work experiences, help them think differently about their possibilities and counsel them through the inevitable frustrations of adolescence. Consequently, many of these youth are overwhelmed by the difficulty of managing their complicated situations and making sound life choices. Too often, they become involved in high-risk activities that limit their prospects.

Some youth-work experts believe that the situation is worse than the official data indicate, especially in the current recession. Young black males are of particular concern because the majority of them do not receive their high school diplomas with their age cohort, are likely to experience significant periods of joblessness and face a high probability of going to prison during their lifetimes.[5] The longer young people operate outside of mainstream institutions, the harder it is for them to re-enter. About two-thirds of disconnected youth are in their early twenties. Some of them are no longer eligible for youth-serving public systems but are not sufficiently mature to use the adult systems successfully.

The Settlement House Response

In New York City's communities**,** settlement houses open up alternative paths for these young people. While many policymakers recognize that young people in these circumstances cannot complete a "safe passage" to adulthood without additional support, much more must be done to make this support a reality.[6] Many of them need a combination of services for increased educational attainment, employment and earnings.[7]

Youth specialists believe that community organizations have a "unique ability to attract and earn the trust of young people,"[8] and settlement houses are ideally positioned in this regard. They can provide a comprehensive yet customized service mix, and their staff members know how to connect with local youth, earn their trust and stay with them until they are on their way to productive adult roles. Settlement houses have a long history of helping struggling youth improve their life prospects, while also supporting their families and promoting young people's positive contributions to community life. UNH members continue this tradition through a two-pronged strategy that works first to reduce the likelihood that young people will disconnect from the institutions that should support their transition to adulthood and then to assist them if they do disconnect.

To advance this dual-focus strategy, settlement houses provide direct services and also advocate for policy and system reforms. For instance, UNH, along with the Neighborhood Family Services Coalition and the Community Service Society, leads *The*

Campaign for Tomorrow's Workforce, a coalition of organizations committed to building a robust system of integrated services for young adults aged 16 to 24 who are neither in school nor engaged in work.

Change can be daunting for youth with multifaceted needs. They must overcome many economic, social and psychological obstacles to developing the skills and dispositions for managing adult responsibilities. To meet this need, UNH members offer disconnected youth coordinated services, providing education, work preparation, life skills, practical assistance and intensive personal support. UNH members also partner with other organizations to leverage resources and thus strengthen the opportunities and supports for youth.

This demanding work requires staff to, in their words, "piece it all together." In the absence of adequate public funding for helping young people, UNH members must coordinate multiple funding streams, services and specialists to create a sequenced set of services that successfully re-engage local youth who are not studying or working.

The Service Challenge

Whether younger or older, disconnected young people are frequently frustrated by catch-up academic work, low-paying jobs, the demands of work-life balance, the psychological adjustment of stopping drug or alcohol use or the need to disengage from their peers who make a living in the underground economy. Consequently, disconnected youth have a reputation for being hard-to-help.

Fortunately, some youth require only a moderate level of assistance to get back on track and are excellent candidates for programs that combine education with work preparation and social support, providing affirmation, information, practical guidance, skill development – and nudging. Unfortunately, these programs are in short supply. Other disconnected youth require extensive support in order to cope with their personal circumstances and strike out in a new direction. These youth are likely to be older, lack basic literacy skills, have a criminal record, suffer from physical or mental health problems or have a history of drug and alcohol abuse. They often find service use hard to sustain, in part because the incentives for participation are not compelling to them and the cultures of helping institutions are perceived as unwelcoming.

The service challenge is to engage youth who intermittently or regularly operate outside of the customary institutions for teenagers and young adults: schools, entry-level jobs, vocational training and youth programs. To work effectively with these youth, staff teams must address the reasons why young people become disconnected from the usual education and service systems. UNH member organization staff report that these young people frequently:

- Feel uncomfortable, unwanted or inadequate in mainstream institutions and are wary of re-engaging with places where they do not fit in.
- Have experienced repeated failure at school or work and are ambivalent about trying to succeed.
- Remain skeptical that obtaining a degree or a low paid job will result in a better future.
- Do not see how program participation will benefit them.
- Live in a subculture in which making a living off-the-books is common.
- Are consumed by present needs because they are managing home responsibilities and crises that get in the way of going to school or working.
- Lack information about programs that can be of help.

Regardless of their specific reasons for not completing high school and preparing for employment, disconnected youth seeking settlement house services face the challenge of using this support effectively. According to settlement house staff, youth participants must complete three stages of program involvement to succeed. First, *they must obtain information about settlement house services*. Secondly, they must *come to a settlement house and speak with a youth worker*. Finally, they must *establish a strong relationship* with staff.

The first stage is deceptively simple: obtain information about the services available. But despite service providers' best efforts to offer outreach approaches that appeal to youth, many young people remain uninformed about their options or discount the feasibility and utility of them.

If young people hear about and want to explore the programs that UNH members offer, they must feel comfortable enough to come into a center and talk with a youth worker. This is a crucial stage of settlement house work. Settlement houses choose youth services staff carefully and try to make initial contacts with young people warm and welcoming because youth are often skittish about program participation. Interactions with them must be thoughtfully orchestrated.

Once engaged, however tenuously, participants must establish a strong relationship with one or more members of the staff team working with them. The quality of staff-participant relationships is a critical determinant of both youth and program success. This stage can be as daunting for participants as for the staff: The young people must learn to tolerate the process for assessing their needs and developing a service plan; come to believe that they have the time and ability to manage participation requirements; gain faith that their future will be better if they enroll, stay the course, work hard, master specific skills and acquire new habits; do the work to earn a degree, hold an internship, complete a training module or stay in a new job; and persist even when the going gets tough.

UNH members are very focused on how to help youth move through these stages, given that participants may drift away from programs when one stage becomes too onerous. Most disconnected youth have had difficulty with this kind of persistence, and some continue having difficulty even in the community settings settlement houses provide. Staff members believe that these difficulties can be perceptual. For instance, a young mother might think that staff will disapprove of her and so she does not seek information about her school options. Other difficulties are psychological. A young man in his twenties finds it humiliating to be told once again that he is reading on a sixth grade level and so he does not enroll in the pre-GED class. Still other difficulties reflect real pressures. An intern comes from a family that expects her to care for younger siblings, and when she cannot meet the internship requirements, she quits.

Settlement house staff members are constantly reexamining how to address these kinds of barriers to service use in order to help young people pursue change. For example, Steven Portericker of Union Settlement notes, “We have to get kids untied from their home responsibilities so they can complete a high school degree, and then we have to make college a reality for everyone.” Lewis Zuchman, of SCAN New York, draws upon Cloward and Ohlin’s classic *Delinquency and Opportunity* to argue that young people need recognition and achievement. If they “perceive personal opportunity” and believe they “have the ability to achieve success,” they will refrain from delinquent and anti-social activity.[9]

Programs and Practice

UNH members offer a wide range of services to address the various needs and circumstances of disconnected youth in their communities. Depending on their age, disconnected youth can use the youth or the adult services within settlement houses. However, members tend to organize their support for these youth into discrete programs with upbeat names. These programs include tried-and-true services as well as new models, including:

- Basic literacy and math skills mastery classes.
- GED preparation, including tutoring and coaching.
- College access-and-retention support.
- Career and workforce education, including internships, vocational training and job placement.
- Support services such as information, personal counseling, mentoring, life skills training, specialized assistance and help coordinating benefits.
- Self-expression forums, such as Hip Hop workshops.
- Social events and other activities, such as use of a basketball court.

Taken together, the settlement houses serving disconnected youth work toward program outcomes that focus primarily on educational attainment and employment, placement in jobs paying more than the minimum wage, job retention and college admission and success. This work is carried out in the context of settlement house values which include:

- An abiding respect for and ongoing affirmation of young people and their capabilities.
- A dedication to improving the environment (family, community, peer, program and policy) that shapes young people's sense of possibility.
- A commitment to equity and accountability in the use of public resources and to compensate for the ways many youth have been shortchanged by public institutions.

The principles of settlement house practice overlap with those of other reform efforts, such as progressive education and social work. UNH members draw upon all of these traditions to provide a foundation for their work with disconnected youth. Key features of this settlement house practice, informed by classic youth development principles and guided by best-practice knowledge, include:

- ***A comprehensive set of services*** combining education and workforce development with intensive personal support and assistance.
- ***A commitment to specific participant outcomes*** as the "North Star" for practice.
- ***A well-structured program initiation process*** with a focus on synchronizing expectations so both youth and program staff are realistic about what success in the program will require.
- ***A laser focus on keeping enrolled participants connected to staff***, program and peers to reduce the likelihood that young people will leave the program.

Staff members are especially concerned about creating durable bonds of trust with program youth. Lewis Zuchman describes this crucial need as follows: "First, we must connect. We have to understand young people on their terms; start where they are; engage them, listen to them, hear what they value and learn from them; offer them respect and trust; empower them. Without this foundation, we fail. Even with this foundation, our work is difficult."

Other priorities characterize UNH members' practice as well:

- ***A developmental perspective.*** To support disconnected youth through the adolescent transition, "a cookie cutter approach won't do," says a staff member. These youth deserve the kind of developmentally-sensitive support many advantaged young people can count on from their families or schools.

An East Side House staff member describes this attentiveness to normative developmental needs:

> We focus on critical developmental periods, such as adolescence, and crucial lifetime junctures – whether to go to college, the first job, starting a career or changing one. At each of these life-changing stages, we provide the tools that help people make better decisions and reach for opportunities that would not be there otherwise.

To give disconnected youth appropriate attention, which they, like all young people, need, UNH members provide what University Settlement's affiliate, The Door, calls an "individualized approach." UNH members offer one or more types of personal care and guidance, including case management, mentoring, counseling, a "primary person," a "critical adult," youth advocates and/or advisory groups.[10] These structures allow staff to respond to age-related issues while taking into account how gender, religion, ethnicity and life events also shape development. As Samuel Colon, of East Side House, observes, this customized focus allows youth to "recover and make leaps."

Of all the ways teens and young adults need support, none is as challenging for staff as increasing young people's capacity for reality-testing, says Steven Portericker. Many youth are more concerned with securing employment than with completing their education and thus ignore what adults tell them about the long-term risks of not having a GED or high school diploma. However, Portericker and his colleagues have learned how to get on young people's wavelengths. He notes, "They'll believe it when they hear it from students who look just like them."

- ***A passion for knowledge.*** UNH members operate in a context where information about "promising and effective" practices for working with youth is readily available, new information about working effectively with disconnected youth is increasingly accessible and tools that support nonprofit effectiveness are abundant.[11] Nonetheless, staff members

who are pressed for time, as all are, have to be very strategic about tapping into and applying knowledge about designing, implementing and sustaining high-quality programming.

To support their learning, staff members report that they join practitioner networks, attend specialized training, secure technical assistance and engage in on-site program reviews (often sparked by examining evaluation findings). They are passionate about ongoing learning and innovation. Dianne Morales, at The Door, notes, "We're our biggest critic. We're delighted to have a chance to think through a really good question. Our programs are always changing because we're committed to continuous improvement."

In recent years, this inquiry-and-improvement stance has led some UNH members to make "major shifts in programming," according to Steven Portericker. They are experimenting with more effective ways to address service challenges and enhance service delivery. For instance, two UNH members, Cypress Hills and East Side House, have served as lab sites for the Youth Development Institute's Community Education Pathways to Success, which "seeks to improve the quality, scale, and sustained systemic support for community-based educational services to youth who have dropped out of school and read at low levels."[12]

As part of this pilot, East Side House is using the Ramp-Up to Literacy curriculum, an integrated pre-GED and youth development model developed by America's Choice. Youth remain in the program using this curriculum until they make sufficient academic gains to begin a GED class. Participation incentives include internships with stipends and a chance to join college tours. Other supports are also available: child care for young parents, counseling, social services, careful preparation so that students do not take the GED test until they are likely to pass it, continuity in instructors (Ramp-UP teachers also teach the GED classes), job placement, an emphasis on participants going through the program as a cohort and student accountability supports. To maximize learning from this pilot, Samuel Colon says, "We seek continuous feedback from the external evaluators about our performance and concrete ways to improve it."

Staff members are pleased that these types of partnerships and pilot projects expand their capacity to strengthen services, participate in cross-agency exchange, advance peer learning and generate accessible knowledge about practice excellence. Lowell Herschberger, at Cypress Hills, believes that intermediary organizations such as the Youth Development Institute "make research practical and have become key resources for our thinking."

A Focus on Implementation

Meeting high standards for practice requires organizational capacity, financial stability, continuous practice refinement and dedication to impact. UNH members recognize that practice excellence is in the implementation details.

- ***Organizational capacity.*** An effective service organization needs four types of capacity: leadership, management, technical and adaptive capacity.[13]

With support from UNH, its members have invested in building capacity, which is one reason why the members profiled here have been particularly successful in attracting exceptional staff, tapping new knowledge, partnering with outside organizations, piloting innovations, building new data management systems and experimenting with quality improvements.

- ***Financial stability.*** Financing for youth programs is barebones and uncertain. And so it is for UNH members. They must be, and are, highly entrepreneurial in order to secure funds from many sources to keep their programs afloat and flourishing.

They obtain public contracts and private grants from a constantly shifting group of funders. The irony of this situation is not lost on staff who note that "financially it costs us as a society so much more to do things the wrong way," turning vulnerable youth into disconnected youth, than to educate all youth effectively in the first place. Yet, sound programming and practice for disconnected youth is also resource-intensive and costly. Some UNH members are trying to determine a reasonable way to calculate per participant costs. Cypress Hills has created an estimate and uses it to explain to participants that they are the beneficiaries of a scholarship of this dollar amount to support their continuing education and work preparation. This type of

approach holds promise for convincing policymakers that investing in young people who are willing to invest in themselves makes sense and is worthy of greater public funding, which in turn would create greater financial stability for programs.

- ***Practice refinement.*** In countless ways, settlement houses have implemented state-of-the-art practice refinements to improve services for disconnected youth.

For example, Cypress Hills has developed a carefully-sequenced, fully-transparent, three-step introduction, orientation and enrollment process so that the program and young person can "try out" the match between them to ensure a good fit. Cypress Hills has also instituted other new approaches to increase participants' level of commitment, including asking them to agree in writing to abide by expectations regarding tardiness, absences and classroom behavior. Similarly, East Side House has redesigned its intake process to make young people's educational evaluation experience less stressful and to strengthen their program commitment and readiness.

Another UNH member, East Side House, helps youth learn the art of resume-building through on-site internships, promotes "come back to give back" activities (encouraging alumni involvement in current programming to model the value of serving one's community and to reinforce participants' future orientation), taps the *pro bono* services of a legal action center where young ex-offenders can "get their documents right" and asks youth to "contribute where you're strong."

The Door calls itself "relentless" in helping young people "figure out where they want to go and help them get there." Dianne Morales says, "Our programs are increasingly developing long-term participation structures" for young people needing more than average time to complete their transition to adult roles. She adds, "We recognize that building skills is not rewarding and fulfilling for many young people, given the barriers they have to overcome in the real world on a daily basis, so we offer them financial incentives to persist in their education."

Additionally, SCAN favors "groups in everything we do" to help create positive peer influence as well as to use staff time efficiently. Some of this work takes place on the basketball court and soccer fields, some takes place in programs.

Union Settlement mines its own programs (focused on young fathers, sports, over-age and under-credentialed students and adult education) to identify young people who are ready to complete the pre-GED program for disconnected youth. All of the organizations use celebrations and certificates to mark milestones and achievement.

- ***Impact.*** Given the long and steep path many disconnected youth are on, UNH members are eager to maximize their participant impact. They believe that appropriate outcomes for disconnected youth should reflect the consensus about desirable outcomes for all youth. These outcomes focus on health and safety, reductions in risky behaviors, improved social and emotional development, educational attainment and achievement, work and self-sufficiency, family formation and civic engagement.[14]

Dianne Morales sums up the boldness of what UNH members want to accomplish, "What we are really trying to do is have an impact on the life cycle of these young people."

While each UNH member articulates desirable participant outcomes in its own way, all of them focus on *readiness* in its many dimensions—youth ready to work, ready for adult responsibilities, ready for college, ready to give back to their communities and ready to manage life's hard knocks. And because readiness is hard to measure, UNH members assess participants' achievement of individual milestones such as grade gains, test scores, a high school diploma, college enrollment, career-track position and job retention.

With limited evaluation funding and follow-up with youth hard to sustain, most of the UNH members do not have as much data about longer-term service impact as they would like. However, several are working with outside evaluators to develop effective monitoring, assessment and performance improvement systems. Others have partnered with intermediaries to collect data and examine findings to contribute to a longstanding need in youth services for better information on the kinds of participant gains that are achievable in specific timeframes and conditions. Program staff welcome new assessment tools if they are practical and provide information useful for both participants and staff.

Factors Affecting Good Practice

Good practice is like a fine concert. For an excellent performance, many dimensions of practice must be strong and pulled together well. UNH staff members are concerned about three factors in the external environment that affect practice quality:

- ***Public will.*** It is hard for good practice to flourish when support for America's most vulnerable young people is limited. To redirect the lives of disconnected youth requires public determination at many levels – at the building and block level, at the neighborhood and city level and at the state and national level. Political, civic, and business leaders in all these places must insist that this nation can no longer waste the potential of so many youth.

- ***Policy.*** Good practice requires supportive public policy. Crafting service approaches that increase the likelihood that disconnected youth will participate, progress and develop their potential in order to achieve success as individuals and as contributors to their families and communities is hard enough. UNH members and other organizations serving disconnected youth also struggle to secure an adequate level of funding from disparate sources. Supporting disconnected youth would be less challenging if the organizations serving them could obtain sufficient resources for programs offering, as needed, support of a longer duration and partnerships with work-based learning programs.[15]

- ***Knowledge generation and exchange.*** Good practice remains an inexact science and cannot be done "on the cheap" because staff qualifications and competence matter. Reaching, retaining and supporting the success of disconnected youth should be handled by highly-skilled youth specialists. Practitioners and researchers need ways to collaborate to refine the knowledge these specialists can use, and youth-focused institutions must extend knowledge application by increasing opportunities for practitioner learning. UNH and its members as well as other youth-focused organizations, advocates and funders, many of whom are cited in the acknowledgements and endnotes of this publication, are working toward this goal.

Commitment to Youth

In the early 1990s, a youthful gang controlled drug trafficking in a Manhattan neighborhood. The media called these teenage dealers "talented children." Reflecting upon their plight, Lewis Zuchman, of SCAN New York, asked, who will offer them opportunity?[16] This question still hangs in the air. *New York Times* op-ed writer Bob Herbert has focused on the tragedy of such youth: "They are no one's constituency. They might as well not exist."[17]

UNH and its members have made these youth their responsibility and priority. Along with colleagues and community activists across the city and the nation, they have called upon policymakers and people of conscience to attend to those "mired at the bottom," to use Herbert's phrase.[18] The youth work described in this publication shows what is required to help such youngsters. The advocacy work UNH and its colleagues are leading through *The Campaign for Tomorrow's Workforce* points the way to scale up this youth practice.

A dramatic decline in the number and concentration of disconnected youth has to become a priority through two overarching strategies: keeping young people from disengaging in the first place by strengthening the support available to low-income families, who make up a significant proportion of New Yorkers, and providing the current generation of disconnected youth sufficient support to turn around their lives.

A prosperous nation, even in the middle of an historic recession, must ask itself why vulnerable young people should be denied their fair share of opportunity. A competitive nation must ask itself how we can continue to prosper if employers are unable to hire enough workers with the skills jobs now require.

Herbert's answer is that "America needs to dream bigger." Settlement houses have historically supported such dreams and continue to do so. UNH members' knowledge of effective practice with disconnected youth constitutes an emerging specialization that should be tapped by practitioners, advocates and policymakers to create better futures for these young people.

SETTLEMENT HOUSE PRACTICE FOR IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

Settlement houses have traditionally served low-income immigrant families who often need assistance navigating their new city and country. UNH members serve as a haven and a hub for the city's immigrant families. Using the distinctive settlement house practice described in the first section of this report, UNH members provide supports and services to these families and work alongside them to advocate for social reform.

With this two-pronged focus, settlement houses help immigrant adults meet others in similar situations, secure basic rights and public services, enroll in English-language and citizenship-preparation classes, improve their economic security, celebrate cultural traditions, work on neighborhood issues, earn recognition for contributions to city life and pursue their version of the American dream. All of these experiences foster participants' self-respect and self-determination. For the offspring of immigrants, UNH members offer additional services and promote an advocacy agenda focused on children, youth and young adults.

This comprehensive support allows immigrant families to adjust and flourish so that they can create new lives while maintaining ties with the past. Leaders of UNH member organizations are highly conscious of the value of the settlement house model. Some of their observations:

- Mary Abbate, of Queens Community House: "Settlement houses are the arenas where everyday America's story is told and unfolds. We are the certainty in an uncertain world."

- Laura Kollins, of Hamilton-Madison House: "What makes settlement houses unique is that we work with immigrants at the beginning of their journeys. We become involved in so many aspects of their lives."

- Karen Courtney, of BronxWorks: "In settlement houses, everyone gets individualized attention. We meet people where they are and support them through service use — they don't have to negotiate everything for themselves. In our workforce development programs, this is especially true. We know that jobs come through networking so our role is to create the network."

- Julia Jean-Francois, of the Center for Family Life in Sunset Park: "Because we offer multiple points of relationship, settlement houses are exactly the right place to help families resolve many kinds of issues. All of our program components are designed to reinforce the role of the agency as a stabilizing anchor in the community."

Settlement house practice with immigrant families is founded in the principles described in the previous section and employs many of the methods found to be effective in working with disconnected youth. But there are also challenges uniquely faced by immigrant families and those who serve them, as discussed below.

Immigrant Families' Needs and Aspirations

New York City has always been a portal for newcomers to the United States. The current wave of immigrants is the largest since the beginning of the 20th century. At present, sixty percent of city residents are foreign-born or the children of foreign-born, with Hispanics becoming the largest immigrant group.[19] This demographic shift benefits New York City in many ways.[20] *New* New Yorkers offer the kind of energy, job skills, and cultural diversity that improves, enlivens and enriches city life. Yet, this change in the city's population challenges local institutions, including UNH member organizations, as they try to assist low-income immigrant families.[21]

The backgrounds of this group of *new* New Yorkers vary enormously. Some families include members who came to New York City years ago, while other families moved here recently. Some families entered the United States voluntarily, while others fled here as refugees. Some families are legal residents, but others include a mix of documented and undocumented members. Some families are intact, but most families have left members "back home."

Many of the difficulties for low-income immigrant families in New York City are similar to those for other economically-insecure families, especially those who have come to the city from elsewhere in the United States. However, certain issues are unique to or concentrated among immigrant families. The foreign-born generation must contend with the emotional impact of their pre-emigration situations as well as the emigration experience (sometimes including refugee trauma), the loss of social capital (networks, status and power) and the sense of dislocation that comes with moving to a new place. For this generation, the family unit is often configured with members living in two countries. While the foreign-born members in the United States usually maintain connections to relatives in their country of origin and to their culture and heritage, they must also learn how to speak English, manage in American society and communicate cross-culturally. In addition, sometimes this generation becomes embroiled in intra-family conflict about how to apply or adapt the behavioral norms of their homeland or cultural group (for instance, about parenting, gender, marriage and help-seeking). Too often, family members must cope with prejudice or hostility rooted in xenophobia or racial bigotry.

The children of immigrants face some of the same issues as their parents, but the struggles of first-generation Americans are also distinctive. They are often burdened with the task of cross-cultural translation for their families, if not actual language translation, while they must find their own path between the values and customs of their families of origin and the American communities and situations they find themselves in. Identity and aspiration issues are well-documented in research and literature for this generation, as are cases of insecurity and truncated opportunities for the children of undocumented immigrants.

Helping low-income immigrant families in New York City is a daunting task. The number of families is huge, they often face hard-to-resolve complications in their legal status, which can make them fearful about institutional involvement and they are profoundly affected by the wage stagnation and joblessness among low-income workers. In addition, recent immigrants include groups that have not previously been present in large numbers in New York City, so that their religious and cultural traditions may not be familiar to those interacting with them. And, finally, the resources for services have not kept pace with need.

To provide help to the immigrant families who turn to them, UNH member organizations must cobble together funds from public contracts, private donations and foundation grants, while tapping volunteers for additional human resources. Developing and sustaining necessary levels of organizational capacity is a formidable undertaking for every UNH member.

Settlement House Support

While settlement houses have historically served immigrants, UNH members have taken many different routes and approaches to working with immigrant families. The Shorefront YM-YWHA has worked with predominantly immigrant families since its founding in 1949. Other members have reorganized their offerings to provide help tailored to today's immigrants. Jacob Riis Neighborhood Settlement House in Queens developed a formal Immigrant Services Program in 2001 to draw immigrant adults into the agency through the door of English language learning. Staff assumed that at least a basic level of English proficiency is essential to immigrant families' success, not only because language is a necessary tool but also because language competence makes learners more confident about taking advantage of other opportunities. The program offers supplementary supports and services to help participants make the most of the adult education classes.

The scope of assistance UNH members provide, on their own or in collaboration with other community agencies, includes a range of supports and services, such as:

- Case management or some other structure for providing information, mentoring, life skills training, specialized assistance and benefits coordination.
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) education.
- High school equivalency education (GED) and other test preparation assistance, through classes, tutoring and coaching.
- Vocational literacy classes, employment counseling and workforce education, training and support.
- Cultural heritage events.
- Life-stage-specific services for children, youth, young adults, adults, parents, seniors and special needs groups.
- Recreational activities that engage families in neighborhood spaces, strengthen social networks and allow participants to meet others in similar circumstances.

- Legal assistance, especially around issues related to immigration status and housing.
- Guidance regarding access to public benefits.
- Citizenship education and preparation.
- Training and coaching for leadership roles.
- Healthy or "positive living" education and services.
- Community organizing and advocacy for local problem-solving and policy improvements.

Attending to the needs and desires of immigrant families by offering help that reflects settlement house practice is what sets settlement houses apart from other multi-service agencies. UNH member organizations' leaders and staff emphasize that "siloed and segregated service delivery" is antithetical to settlement house practice. Instead, they say, "We provide a community within the community." UNH members carefully structure their interactions with immigrant families (as well as other families) so as to engage them based on their presenting requests. Then, over time, staff members respond to families' needs by connecting them to additional programs and making referrals.

Carolyn McLaughlin, Executive Director of BronxWorks, describes this process of fostering integrated services: "We try to cross-fertilize our programs. We practice 'in-reach' to link participants in one program to another program." In this way, families' initial visits become a gateway to other types of participation that can increase their sense of belonging and efficacy. Typically, the available mix of supports and services allows families to become fully engaged with the organization should they wish. As families begin to feel comfortable with staff and each other and as they participate more frequently in programs, they reap the benefit of being part of the settlement house community.

The principles of settlement house practice also influence the location of services. UNH members offer their wide range of services in a variety of neighborhood settings — the main settlement house or community center building, satellite centers, housing projects, schools, recreational centers and parks — as well as in locations beyond the neighborhood, such as the courts. This dispersed access makes UNH member organizations part of the fabric of neighborhoods and their community institutions, allows members to leverage and strengthen local assets and gives families many ways to start a relationship with the organization.

Despite the challenges associated with this work and the high demand for services, settlement houses have a history of developing or adopting innovations that enhance their effectiveness. One of the pioneering settlement house innovations was to offer cultural programs honoring the traditions and talents of neighborhood residents, thus allowing them to come to the organization with pride, rather than as people with problems.

Today UNH members continue to use the principles of settlement house practice to experiment with new approaches to the enduring challenges facing immigrant families. For example:

- Project Hospitality on Staten Island catalyzed the development of a separate organization run for and by immigrants, El Centro del Immigrante. This center now sponsors Las Senoras del Centro, a housekeeping collective for immigrant Latina women that provides a central clearinghouse for housekeeping jobs and basic worker rights information.

- Hamilton-Madison House is organizing Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) that allow the elderly to "age in place" with the first at Knickerbocker Village, an apartment house complex on Manhattan's Lower East Side.

- A number of UNH members offer Single Stop Centers, which provide one "point of service" through which participants can obtain information, guidance, counseling and assistance while accessing a wide variety of government services and benefits.

Other innovations include:

- The Jackson Heights Center of Queens Community House, which is committed to integrating social services and social change, has enrolled hundreds of foreign-born students from countries across the globe in "English School." The students are encouraged to join the School's Community Action Group, which is designed to maximize community-building and reciprocity. Group members and staff collaborate in committees that address immigrant rights, housing and parks. The

Group allows participants to establish meaningful relationships across boundaries of ethnicity and language, provides them with new skills and offers them opportunities for leadership through multiple pathways for collective action.

During a recent morning meeting, 35 Group participants met with the tri-lingual staff leader and a volunteer interpreter. In English, supplemented by Spanish and Bengali, group members reviewed their plans for joining an upcoming immigration reform demonstration in Washington DC and for fundraising to help defray the cost of the trip. They also considered an upcoming "Going Green in Queens" conference and listened to a mini-lesson on the 2010 census.

Reflecting upon her years of working with the Group, local resident Uzma Munir says, "For me it has been wonderful. I increased my confidence and talent. I was young when I married so I didn't get a chance in my country to do anything like this. It was my dream to do so."

The Community Action Group model reflects the Queens Community House mantra, "What matters is not only what we do but also *how* we do it." The organization took multiple steps to help staff members see themselves as both service providers and community builders by: focusing in staff education sessions on creating a common understanding of community building across programs; including "commitment to community-building" in staff members' annual appraisal as one of 15 agency-wide employee evaluation standards; and including in the staff handbook descriptions of actions and principles for fostering community building.[22]

- The Behavioral Health Service offered by Hamilton-Madison House is an outpatient mental health service that has been carefully customized to accommodate the needs values, and sensitivities of the Asian American community. Peter Yee, Assistant Executive Director of Behavior Health, notes, "We honor cultural beliefs and practices as long as they are not harmful." He reports that families with members who have mental illnesses or addictions often need different treatment approaches because they resist the western model, which involves "talking about problems with people who are outside the family." Because the idea of entering therapy is alien to many of these families, Health Service leaders created the Continuing Day Treatment program "for those who need structure but cannot tolerate therapy."

To extend the influence of the Behavioral Health Service, Hamilton-Madison House works with experts to create materials that can help practitioners acquire best-practice cultural competencies. For instance, with the Psychiatric Institute, staff members are experimenting with offering "video cultural broker" services to clinicians in areas lacking staff with the background needed to help Asian immigrants.

- BronxWorks includes a well-established legal assistance service staffed by two attorneys and caseworkers. The staff team helps immigrants with citizenship applications, naturalization processes and other types of petitions. The team is careful to complement services provided by other Bronx agencies focused on legal assistance to low-income residents.

Good Practice for Immigrant Families

To design, develop and deliver effective supports and services for immigrant families, UNH members must attend to routine practice challenges, such as juggling multiple and sometimes conflicting requirements for service eligibility, while also devising ways to respond effectively to challenges that are particular to serving immigrant families. UNH member staff identified five such challenges:

- ***Attracting and retaining staff*** who are diverse, culturally competent and professional.
- ***Accommodating cultural expectations*** by modifying programs.
- ***Responding effectively to the changing demographics*** of immigrant neighborhoods.
- ***Supporting immigrants as contributors***, not "problems."
- ***Helping undocumented immigrants*** who are afraid to be involved in any service system.

The first challenge is staff recruitment.[23] UNH members seek out talented bi-lingual, bi-cultural staff. However, recruiting individuals who are well trained, fluent in two or more languages and steeped in the relevant cultural traditions is difficult in part because of the competition for such staff. For instance, Hamilton-Madison House, which primarily serves Asians from China,

Korea, Japan, Vietnam and increasingly, Tibet, has had to recruit both nationally and internationally. To do this, the human resources department has become expert in helping potential staff secure visas and green cards. At the same time, program leaders have had to help the foreign nationals with their own adjustments to living in the United States.

The second challenge – cultural sensitivity – goes to the heart of the participant-centered approach that settlement houses offer. Tailoring supports and services to respect participants' cultural norms is central to settlement house practice. Laura Kollins, Director of the Childcare Center at Hamilton-Madison House, notes that serving families well "takes trust and trust comes through word of mouth."

Thirdly, serving new demographic groups in a neighborhood requires flexibility and inventiveness. Project Hospitality has helped to organize many neighborhood coalitions to respond collectively and creatively to emerging issues in its community. Director Terry Troia notes, "We're about changing systems as well as saving lives."

The fourth challenge – supporting immigrant participants as contributors – reflects a core settlement house principle: work with participants from a "strengths-based perspective" as opposed to a "deficit view." The Queens Community House's Community Action Group and Project Hospitality's El Centro del Immigrante are both examples of the way UNH members support self-organizing and civic engagement.

Finally, attending to undocumented immigrants reflects UNH members' commitment to immigrant families. Emil Delgado, Director of Legal Services at BronxWorks, cautions, "Immigration is a very private experience." All of the UNH members interviewed for this profile struggle with how to do their best for a group of immigrants that live in fear.

To promote excellent settlement house practice, many UNH members invest in staff learning.

- BronxWorks offers a new employee orientation that "infuses" information on settlement houses – history, leaders and philosophy – and stresses the importance of membership in United Neighborhood Houses. The messages conveyed in this initial staff education period are reinforced through a yearly all-agency staff meeting and an agency-wide update, called *Check Notes,* sent to staff with their paychecks.

- Jacob Riis has developed a list of lessons learned, "the vital cornerstones upon which our programs rest."

- The Center for Family Life in Sunset Park leaders expect that staff members must move along a continuous learning curve in trying to serve immigrant families from around the world effectively. Julia Jean-Francois notes, "This has been one giant study session, graduate school all over again." At the Center, research information is highly valued.

The Center conducted a remarkable study of "8,735 families that enrolled in more than one of the Center's programs" in order to learn about "the utilization patterns in the Center's programs over a thirteen-year period between 1994 and 2007."[24] The findings of this research support "the basic assumption that underlies the Center's holistic program model: that the synergy of multiple programs and services working together has the potential to yield a greater impact than that of individual program elements." The Center notes that there are few studies available to which these results might be compared.

Through these practices, UNH members pursue a mix of participant outcomes, some of which are customary for social service organizations, some of which reflect settlement house values, and some of which arise out of the unique needs of immigrant families, such as strengthening English proficiency, immigrant family members' ability to handle American norms and institutions, their capacity for healthy family functioning and their chances of achieving legal status and citizenship; maintaining their positive home-country traditions; teaching self-advocacy skills; easing access to good-quality public services; and offering respect for diversity and community engagement. Regardless of the particular results individual UNH member organizations emphasize, they share one overarching goal -- to use direct services and policy improvements to increase immigrant families' stability, satisfaction and confidence.

The Settlement House Way Continues

When the iconic American settlement house, Hull House in Chicago, opened its doors in 1889, its soon-to-be-famous founder, Jane Addams, sought to contribute to a new order while preserving the best of the old.[25] UNH members continue to hold this goal. Today, settlement houses and community centers ease the transition of the newest New Yorkers by helping them cope with new realities while maintaining cherished traditions.

Jane Addams was especially concerned about the "ruptured lives" of immigrants.[26] UNH members help immigrant families make the most of the opportunities New York City offers. This work is motivated by both compassion and dedication to advancing the dream of American democracy. Jane Addams described the basic building block of this dream as follows: "It was the function of settlements to bring into the circle of knowledge and fuller life, men and women who might otherwise be left outside."[27] UNH members pursue this dream every day.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The research for this report was based on interviews and site visits in 2009 with UNH members and staff listed below. UNH is grateful for the contributions of so many members of the settlement house community.

Disconnected Youth

- ***Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation.*** Founded in 1983, Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation works to revitalize the Cypress Hills community in Brooklyn through economic development, housing preservation, and supporting the positive development of youth and families.

The agency offers three major types of support for disconnected youth: *education* through Youth LEAD (Learning, Educating others and Achieving Dreams), which offers young people ages 17-24 pre-GED and GED classes, job-readiness education (including internships), social events and case management; *college access and retention* through the STEPS counseling program, for young people who do not believe they can attend a four-year college, and Moving Towards Achievement, a collaboration with City Tech (New York City College of Technology) and the Youth Development Institute, to help cohorts of students enroll and succeed at City Tech; and *job training* through the Carpenter's Union Building Works program, Consortium for Worker Education's Auto Mechanics Training program and other courses such as those available through Year-Up, all supplemented by personal support.

Special thanks to: J. Herschberger, director of Young Adult Programs, and Rob Abbot, Director of Youth and Family Services.

- ***The Door.*** Since 2000, The Door has been affiliated with Manhattan's University Settlement. It empowers young people to reach their potential by providing comprehensive youth development services in a diverse and caring environment.

The Door offers a full range of youth programming encompassing education, career development, legal assistance, health services, creative and physical arts, counseling and empowerment groups. Two types of support are especially important for disconnected youth: *youth leadership* through the Leadership Development Institute summer session, which integrates training and work projects to support participants mastering core competencies for influencing their peers positively and advocating for their communities effectively; and *education and career development* through EPOCH, which combines GED preparation, work training, career readiness, internships, and college counseling.

Special thanks to: Dianne Morales, Executive Director, and Melissa Pena, Chief of Staff.

- ***East Side House Settlement.*** East Side House Settlement was established in 1891 and moved in 1963 to the Mott Haven neighborhood of the South Bronx. It provides a range of educational and social supports for children, young adults and families so they can create economic and civic opportunities for themselves, their families and their community.

East Side's "blended" approach to service delivery includes many supports and opportunities for disconnected youth, including: *education* through the Ramp-Up to Literacy model (described on page 13) and young adult services, focused on GED education, job readiness and placement (in positions paying more than $8 per hour) and college access and support; *career learning* through the Career Internship Program, which helps youth learn through working within the agency as well as elsewhere; and *skills training* through the Community Technology Center, which provides access to technology, pedagogical support for teachers and students, vocational training (in Microsoft products), job opportunities and internships.

Special thanks to: Samuel Colon, Director of Youth and Adult Education Services.

- ***Supportive Children's Advocacy Network (SCAN) New York.*** Founded in 1977 and based in East Harlem and the South Bronx, SCAN New York is a family service provider that offers programs that "educate, encourage, inspire, and inform."

SCAN's "suite of programs" offers a variety of ways to engage hard-to reach youth and focus on *motivation* through Reach for the Stars Upward Bound, which targets at risk high-school students and focuses on career and college opportunities to help them "develop potential, raise self-esteem, and set positive goals for themselves" so they stay in school and succeed; anti-gang activities that work to reduce gang recruitment and to increase young people's involvement in activities such as Generations, which brings together young people with peer mentors/youth leaders and former street gang leaders, many of whom have dramatically re-directed their lives in positive ways; and Hip Hop/Spoken Word workshops at school-based community centers.

Special thanks to: Lewis Zuchman, Executive Director.

- ***Union Settlement Association.*** Founded in 1895 and dedicated to solving urban problems in Harlem through education programs and human services, Union Settlement Association promotes leadership development and fosters economic self-sufficiency to help individuals and families build a stronger community.

Union's programs "seek to nurture multiple aspects of young people's lives, including education skills, career preparation, cultural enrichment and personal expression." These programs include: *education* through E3 (Education, Employment and Empowerment Program), which provides young black men, ages 16-24, with 15 hours of pre-GED instruction complemented by five hours of tutoring, counseling, leadership development and workforce readiness training and includes a monthly stipend if enrollees meet attendance and participation standards.

Special thanks to: Steven Portericker, Director of Youth Services.

Immigrant Families

- ***BronxWorks.*** Founded in 1972, BronxWorks is a multi-service organization whose mission is to help individuals and families improve their economic and social well-being. BronxWorks has 28 locations in the South Bronx and serves over 37,500 borough residents annually.

Bronxworks provides an array of services to address the needs of all age groups from infants to senior citizens, as well as selected special needs populations. These include immigrants, homeless individuals and families, people impacted by HIV/AIDS and adults making the transition from welfare to work. Services include children, youth, family and senior citizen programs; immigrant assistance; employment help; HIV/AIDS programs; homeless services; and homelessness prevention.

Special thanks to: Carolyn McLaughlin, Executive Director, John Weed, Assistant Executive Director, and Emil Delgado, Director of Legal Services.

- ***Center for Family Life in Sunset Park.*** Established in 1978, the Center offers a comprehensive range of neighborhood-based social services to foster personal growth, family wellbeing, youth development and community strength.

A majority of the families served are Latino, but many are from China, the Middle East, and Europe. The Center offers a continuum of services and multiple points of entry for service use.

Special thanks to: Julia Jean-Francois, Co-Executive Director, and Bela Rex-Kiss, Development Assistant.

- ***Hamilton-Madison House.*** Established in 1898, the Hamilton-Madison House is dedicated to improving the quality of life of its community, primarily those in the Two Bridges/Chinatown area of Manhattan's Lower East Side. The neighborhood is a federally designated poverty area, with a constantly changing mixture of ethnic groups and a lack of adequate services and resources.

The House speaks the many languages of the community, promotes understanding and cooperation among the ethnic groups and is attuned to their changing needs. It encourages the sharing of resources and responsibilities through the active participation of every segment of the community.

Special thanks to: Mark Handelman, Executive Director, Peter Yee, Assistant Executive Director for Behavioral Health Services, and Laura Kollins, Administrative Director of Child Care.

- ***Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement House.*** Established in 1901, the Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement House offers comprehensive services to youth, adults, and families in one of the nation's largest public housing developments, Queensbridge Houses in western Queens.

While program participants come from 47 countries and speak 19 languages, most are Hispanic. In addition to homeland, language and cultural diversity, participants vary extensively in age, education, employment and socioeconomic status.

Special thanks to: William T. Newlin, Executive Director, and Alison Egic-Millan, Director of Immigrant Services.

- ***Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation.*** Founded in 1979 to serve the Washington Heights and Inwood communities, in which immigrants make up about half of the population, the Corporation helps the poorest residents become economically stable and active community participants.

This support is designed to minimize evictions, improve hazardous housing, educate and train residents to get better jobs, expand good quality child care, assure clients' access to entitlements and reduce domestic violence. Community organizing is central to giving residents a greater voice in the decisions affecting their lives.

Special thanks to: Barbara Lowry, Executive Director, and Paula Walzer, Director of Development.

- ***Queens Community House.*** Queens Community House began in 1975 as Forest Hills Community House and now serves over 20,000 Queens residents at 17 sites with 30 programs.

About 60 percent of the participants are immigrants representing a broad range of cultures and a variety of needs, such as learning English, securing child care and obtaining assistance with tenants' rights. Often service use begins with an individual and then leads to family involvement.

Special thanks to: Irma Rodriquez, executive director, Mary Abbate, Assistant Executive Director for Community Services, Hannah Weinstock, Former Community Organizer, KC Williams, Director of Adult Education, Alexia Meyer, Youth Coordinator, and Anna Dioguardi, Director of Community Organizing and Development.

- ***Supportive Children's Advocacy Network (SCAN) New York.*** SCAN New York blends family preservation and community-building approaches to meet the needs of families, many of whom are recent immigrants from Mexico, South America and West Africa. SCAN provides a full array of educational, counseling, social support and recreational services at schools and other neighborhood locations so that participants feel welcomed and safe.

Special thanks to: Lewis Zuchman, Executive Director.

- ***Shorefront YM-YWHA***. Founded in 1949 and separately incorporated in 1991, Shorefront YM-YWHA builds community, strengthens families and empowers individuals to achieve their potential by offering a wide range of programs to meet the evolving needs of residents, mostly immigrants.

The Y is located in South Brooklyn's Brighton-Manhattan Beach area, which has the highest concentration in the nation of immigrants from the former Soviet Union. The Y also serves people from Latin America, Pakistan, the Caribbean, and China.

Special thanks to: Sue Fox, Executive Director, Lawrence Fish, Émigré Adult, Education and Vocational Services, Miriam Markowitz, Early Childhood Program Director, Irina Volkovich, Director of Arts and Culture, and Anna Bronfman, Program Director.

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70 West 36th Street, 5th Floor New York, NY 10018
Tel: 212-967-0322 Fax: 212-967-0792 www.unhny.org